

## Questions and Answers

NOTE: **UPDATED** refers to changes to the Government's responses to the pre-submitted questions (A1-A20) presented at the Pre-Solicitation Conference held on June 23, 2015.

Q1: Consider rewording the Special Standard of Responsibility in a manner similar to previous RFPs (i.e., STARSS I, STARSS II, and TEAMS 2) to allow Offerors who are fully ISO 9001 compliant but not yet "Certified/Registered" to "develop quality system procedures and associated documentation and obtain ISO 9001 certification/Registration within nine months after the contract effective date." The ISO 9001 certification requirement, as it is written now, limits small business competition as proposals submitted by any companies who are fully ISO 9001 Compliant, but not certified/registered, "will not be considered" and we request that the STARSS III RFP contain language consistent with that found in STARSS I, STARSS II, and TEAMS 2.

A1: The Government considered the ISO 9001 certification during the development of the acquisition strategy and determined that this procurement requires ISO 9001 certification upon receipt of proposals due to the type of work on the contract. The ISO 9001 quality management system requirement has existed for a sufficient period of time such that that companies performing ISO 9001 work on Center at NASA LaRC, are required to be certified.

Q2: We request clarification of the CMMI Level 2 requirements stated in the DRFP. Our interpretation of the CMMI-related wording in the STARSS III DRFP is that only those companies on a team that will actually perform software engineering and processing must be CMMI Level 2 at the time of award. Thus, in a scenario where all software engineering is performed by the major subcontractors, only those subcontractors, and not the Prime, would be required to be at CMMI Level 2 or above.

### **UPDATED**

A2: In accordance with H.13, CAPABILITY MATURITY MODEL INTEGRATION (CMMI) REQUIREMENTS (LaRC 52.246.105) (MAR 2012), the Contractor (including subcontractors) that will be performing software engineering shall have a non-expired rating at CMMI for Development (CMMI-DEV) Maturity Level 2 or higher for software, or Capability Level 2 or higher as measured by a Software Engineering Institute (SEI) authorized lead appraiser from an external organization. The Offeror shall provide proof of a current CMMI for Development Capability Level 2 rating or higher for each entity [Prime and/or subcontractor(s)] that will be engaged in software engineering requiring CMMI DEV-CMMI Level 2. In order to demonstrate this compliance, the Offeror shall provide a copy of the rating and Appraisal Disclosure Statement (ADS), which gives the scope and results of a SCAMPI-A appraisal for CMMI-DEV with its proposal.

Q3: Reference DFRP cover page 2, paragraph "b." which indicates- that Offerors are encouraged to provide evidence of compliance with the CMMI requirements "as soon as possible", and further states that those who submit the evidence concurrent with the

proposal submission run the risk that the documentation may be unacceptable. However, Page 64, paragraph “(iv)” states that Offers shall provide a copy of the certifications and ratings at the time of proposal submission. Please clarify if the government would prefer that the Offerors submit the certifications and/or other evidence prior to the proposal due date.

**UPDATED**

A3: The DRFP’s cover page 2, paragraph 5 b., states Offerors are encouraged to provide evidence of compliance with the standards listed as soon as possible. This will allow time for Government review and/or request for clarifications and additional information, if needed. Offerors must submit evidence of compliance by the time proposals are due, however, Offerors choosing to submit evidence of compliance for the first time with their proposal at the date and time shown in Block 9 of the SF 33 (face page of the solicitation) do so at the risk that their documentation may be unacceptable and their proposal will not be considered.

Q4: Reference page 82, Section M.3, Subfactor 1 – Please clarify the importance/weighting of Subfactor 1(a) “Staffing and Management” and Subfactor (b) “Organizational OCI & PCI” relative to the 650 points allocated to Subfactor 1. In other words, of the 650 points for Subfactor 1, how many points are allocated to subfactors (a) and (b)?

A4: No points are allocated separately to Subfactor (a) and (b) nor is there a weighting of Subfactors 1(a) Staffing and Management and Subfactor (b) Organizational Conflicts of Interest and Personal Conflicts of Interest.

Q5: Reference Attachment 2 – Staffing Plan – What is the current average productive work year for the incumbent staff (i.e. average hours charged direct to the contract one Full Time Equivalent)?

A5: The Government will not provide the current average productive work year for the incumbent contractor.

Q6: Reference page 64, Section L.13 (d) – Proposal Organization - The Proposal Organization Table includes that a different number of copies are needed of each section of Volume 2 (i.e. Business Proposal: Original + 5 Copies, Responsibility Determination Documents: Original + 3 Copies, Contract Offer: Original + 1 Copy). Is it the government’s intent that Volume 2 be provided as three sub-Volumes in order to be consistent with the number of copies required?

In addition, Section L.13 (c) indicates that the ISO 9001-2008 certification and proof of CMMI for Development Capability Level 2 should be provided in the Contract Offer section while Section L.15 indicates they should be in the Responsibility Determination Documents section.

Please clarify what content is required in each section of Volume 2 and the number of copies of Volume 2 that are to be provided.

A6: The Government does not intend for the Offeror to submit three sub-Volumes of Volume 2. Section L.13 (d) will be revised to increase the number of copies from 3 to 5 for the Responsibility Determination Documents and to require only the original Contract Offer.

Also, Section L.13(c) Contract Offer, paragraph, 2(iv) will be deleted in its entirety. Offerors shall abide by the instructions in Section L.13(c).

Q7: Section L.13, d), 2, page 65 – Figure/Table Font Size Question - Is Arial 10pt. font acceptable for Figure Captions and Tables?

A7: No, the Government requires Arial 11 font for all text throughout all volumes to include graphs, graphics, charts, tables, and figure captions.

Q8: L.16 Factor 2, page 69 – Cost/Price Question - Per Form 3-WYEs & Labor Rates there are 278-276 WYEs on the contract. Per G.5 of the draft contract there will be office space provided at the government facility for 155 personnel. Should bidder assume 121-123 WYEs are to be bid as Offsite (housed at contractor facility) and for which categories?

**UPDATED**

A8: The Government will provide office space for up to 155 personnel of the 271-273 WYEs on the contract. The Offeror shall propose where the remaining personnel will be located and the labor categories of the offsite personnel. The labor categories of the personnel currently on-site/off-site is in the Bidder's Resource File entitled (STARSSII\_Historial\_Staffing\_Onsite-offsite\_20150629.xlsx).

Q9: L.16 Factor 2, page 69 – Cost/Price Question - Form excel columns C, f, I, L and O has a title "Allocation Base 5". Should the title be "hours" to correspond with column R?

**UPDATED**

A9: Columns C, F, I, L, and O (in Cost Form 2) are for direct labor hours, the allocation bases for indirect costs, and the base for fixed fee.

Column R (in Cost Form 2) is simply the total hours for each proposed labor category (i.e. across the entire period of performance).

Columns C, F, I, L, and O (in Cost Form 2) entitled "Allocation Base" incorrectly references footnote [5]. The correct footnote for these columns is [8]. Below the table in Cost Form 2, the Footnote 8 reads:

"(8) Show the hours for each proposed labor category and the allocation base for each indirect cost element and fee."

The Government will revise the title and superscript of columns C, F, I, L, and O in Cost Form 2, from “Allocation Base <sup>5</sup>” to “Labor Hours or Allocation Base <sup>8</sup>”.

Q10: L.16 Factor 2, page 69 – Cost/Price Question - Per Form 1-Total Price Summary worksheet there is a row for “IDIQ – CLIN 3”. Are bidders to complete a price the IDIQ portion of the contract? If so, will worksheets be provided in the RFP?

A10: Offerors are simply required to propose the IDIQ amounts that are already included in Form 1: \$12M per year, \$60M in total. Also, please see the paragraph entitled “Form 1” under Sec. L.16(b)(1), which states: “Form 1 – Total Price Summary: This form is completely self-calculating. Offerors shall not make changes to Form 1. If proposed, the Phase-In price is part of the Total Proposed Price.”

Q11: L.16 Factor 2, page 69 – Cost/Price Question - Per L.16 c) Subcontractors may submit proprietary cost data directly to NASA. Should significant subcontractors submit Form 3 or Form 4 to NASA? Form 3 includes indirect rate detail, Form 4 does not.

A11: Form 3 does not include indirect rate detail. It includes the RFP specified labor categories, WYEs, and average direct labor rates. The only part of Form 3 to be completed by Offerors (and significant subcontractors) is cell C7: productive work year.

As it pertains to significant subcontractors, Form 4 would be for the significant sub’s subcontractor(s) (if proposed) (i.e., second tier subcontractors).

The Government will revise DRFP Section L.16(c)(1)

The DRFP states that significant subcontractors must submit a proposal in accordance with DRFP Section L.16 of the solicitation (i.e. must complete and submit all Forms). The Government will revise L.16(c)(1) to read as follows:

“1) Each significant subcontractor, as defined in L.6, shall be supported with a separate cost proposal that complies with all cost/pricing instructions of this solicitation, except for the following:

Subcontractors shall not propose the IDIQ amounts listed in Form 1 [\$12M per year].  
Subcontractors shall not propose the ODC amounts listed in Form 2 [\$1.5M per year].  
Subcontractors shall not complete Form 6, Verification of Limitations on Subcontracting.

If not included in the Offeror’s proposal (e.g., due to proprietary cost data), each significant subcontractor shall submit its cost proposal directly to NASA no later than the date and time specified in the instructions for receipt of offers for this solicitation. The price(s) presented in the Offeror’s proposal for the subcontracted effort(s) will be considered the intended price(s). If applicable, the Offeror shall explain any differences between the subcontractor total proposed price and that proposed by the prime Offeror. The Offeror shall provide sufficient information to support their determination of

price/cost reasonableness of subcontractor proposed costs (see FAR 15.404-3, Subcontract pricing considerations)."

Q12: Introduction, page 2 – Size Standard Issue: We request that the small business size standard selected for the STARSS-III procurement be reviewed. While the NAICS code 541712, Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences, is applicable, the invocation of an exception to the base size standard of 500 is not warranted. The preponderance of work for this contract, as described in the Draft RFP and RFI, as well as the preponderance of work on the existing STARSS-II contract, is atmospheric science, atmospheric science instrument development and atmospheric science data processing. Very little, if any, of the work is properly described by the allowed exceptions to this size standard. We therefore request that the exception be removed and the base size standard of 500 employees for NAICS 541712 be applied to this procurement.

A12: The Government reviewed the small business size standard selected and determined NAICS Code 541712 and small business size standard of 1,000 employees is appropriate for this procurement. This procurement requires an in-depth knowledge of spacecraft and launch vehicles in order to accommodate science payloads. It also requires translation of research objectives and scientific requirements into viable instruments concepts for ground-, aircraft-, and space-based atmospheric research applications. This procurement will support current and future space instruments/experiments launched on space vehicles (i.e., SAGE III, CERES, RBI, CALIPSO, and CLARREO). Furthermore, this contract will support space qualifications of instruments including but not limited to vibration, thermal, and vacuum tests.

Q13: L.17 – Past Performance Proposal – Volume III, Factor 3, pages 73 & 74 and M.2 Evaluation Factors, Factor 3 – Past Performance, pages 80 & 81: Would the government please clarify and expand upon the requirement and evaluation process for past performance, specifically in regards to the \$10M annual obligations threshold? The DRFP indicates that a prime contractor citing three \$10M contracts would receive a "somewhat pertinent" score, which translates to a "low level of confidence" for size relevancy as described in Section M. This appears to be overly constraining for small business concerns. Furthermore, the DRFP does not indicate what is required to achieve any higher level of confidence for size relevancy.

#### UPDATED

A13: The SEB will conduct the past performance evaluation in accordance with FAR 15.305 and NFS 1815.305. As a result of multiple questions from industry the Government will revise L.17 a) to remove the dollar threshold required to meet a "somewhat pertinent" rating for size. The SEB will assign one confidence rating for the Past Performance proposal. The evaluation conducted is an evaluation of pertinence (recent (past 3 years), of size, content and complexity) for the proposal team (prime and significant subcontractors) and performance, which results in an overall Level of Confidence rating.

No further thresholds will be specified.

The Government will revise the first paragraph of L.17a) to read as follows:

“a) Proposal Content – The Offeror shall include a list of the three most relevant contracts that the prime as well as each significant subcontractor have on-going or completed within the past three (3) years for requirements that are similar in size in dollars per year, content, and complexity to the requirements of this solicitation (including Federal, State, and local Government and private contracts). For the purpose of determining size relevance, the Government will compare the size of work performed for the referenced contracts to the total price proposed for CLIN 2.

It is the responsibility of the Offeror to clearly and completely demonstrate in its proposal the relevancy of each of the prior contracts offered in terms of size, content (as specified in 11 below) and complexity to the current procurement. For each contract identified, include:”

The Government will revise the third paragraph of M.2 Factor 3 – PAST PERFORMANCE to read as follows:

“For the purpose of determining size relevance, the Government will compare the size of work performed for the referenced contracts to the total price proposed for CLIN 2. The confidence rating assigned to Past Performance will reflect consideration of information contained in the proposal; past performance evaluation input provided through customer questionnaires, and data NASA obtains from other sources. Offerors without a record of relevant past performance, or for whom information on past performance is not available, shall receive a neutral rating.”

Q14: Section L, paragraph FACTOR 1 – MISSION SUITABILITY states “The Offeror shall identify and discuss 5 of the most significant programmatic risks for each subfactor and the approach to avoid, neutralize or mitigate such risks, during contract performance as set forth in NFS1815.305, Proposal evaluation.” Are we correct to assume that a total of 10 risks are to be presented, i.e., five for each subfactor?

A14: Yes, the Government requires five (5) risks for each of the two (2) subfactors.

Q15: FACTOR 3 – PAST PERFORMANCE Content Guidelines Subparagraph a) states “The Offeror shall include a list of the firms that will submit past performance questionnaires along with the written consent of each proposed significant subcontractor to allow NASA to discuss the subcontractors' past performance with the Offeror.” Question: Would it be permissible to exclude the consent letters from page count?

A15: The Government will amend the RFP to exclude the consent letters from the past performance volume page count.

Q16: L.13 PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS, subparagraph d), item 2. states “The Offeror shall use Arial 11 font in its proposal (all volumes). Line spacing or the amount of vertical space between lines of text shall not be less than a single line (Microsoft Word’s default line spacing). Character spacing shall be “normal” and not “expanded” or “condensed”. Question: Would it be permissible to use a smaller font such as Arial Narrow 9 or 10 pt?

A16: See A7.

Q17: SOW Section 3.2 Electronic Contract Management System states” The Government will provide a commercial-off-the-shelf Electronic Contract Management System (ECMS) implemented as a web based ordering system. Question: Has the Government selected the product? If so, please disclose the name of the product.

A17: The Government has not yet selected the commercial-off-the-shelf Electronic Contract Management System (ECMS).

Q18: L.16 FACTOR 2 – COST/PRICE, c) Significant Subcontractor Proposal Information – Question: Is it permissible for the prospective prime contractor to exclusively propose hours for itself and its significant subcontractors and require its significant subcontractors to only include rates and rate data in their sealed packages?

A18: See A11.

Q19: G.5 INSTALLATION-ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT PROPERTY, (C): Question: Will the Government provide computers and ancillary IT equipment to support the 155 on-site personnel? If not, should Offerors assume that costs for this equipment will be accommodated from the \$1.5 million annual ODC budget?

A19: Please see DRFP Section H.10 Government Furnished Information Technology (IT) Services (LaRC 52.245-7) (June 2012), this clause specifies that NASA LaRC will furnish all necessary computers and related information technology services that will be connected to the NASA network infrastructure for all on-site contractors.

Q20: G.6 LIST OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY FURNISHED PURSUANT TO FAR 52.245-1: This Offeror notes that computers and peripheral equipment are not included in Exhibit C, Off-site Government Furnished Property. Will the Government make computers and peripheral equipment available to off-site contractor personnel? If not, should Offerors assume that costs for this equipment will be accommodated from the \$1.5 million annual ODC budget?

**UPDATED**

A20: The Government will not provide computers and peripheral equipment to off-site contractor personnel. The costs for this equipment are not accommodated from the \$1.5 million annual ODC amount.

The Government will modify DRFP Section L.16(f)(1) as follows:

“1) For proposal purposes, the Offeror shall propose all the ODC amounts set forth in Form 2: \$1.5M per year. These amounts are for material, equipment, and travel. Offerors shall not propose ODCs in addition to \$1.5M per year [\$7.5M in total] unless proposing off-site facility costs (provided off-site facility costs are considered direct in accordance with the Offeror's established accounting policies and practices). The Offeror shall provide support and rationale for off-site facility costs. The Offeror shall specify if these costs are, according to the Offeror's established accounting policies and practices, considered direct or indirect and propose these costs accordingly. The Offeror shall apply applicable burden rates to the proposed ODCs.”

Q21: Will the Govt. consider changing the font from Arial to Times New Roman?

A21: See A7.

Q22: Can the Govt. clarify what the font size should be in Tables, Graphics, etc.? Typically for text within tables, and especially graphics, it is common for text font size to be 10 pt. Graphics with text font size larger than 10 pt are often overwhelmed by the dominance of the text size, particularly in process flows.

A22: See A7.

Q23: On page 75 of the Draft RFP, in Section L.17(b), it states: "The Offeror is requested to return the completed past performance questionnaires no later than the timeframe specified in L.13(b), Proposal Submission Information to the email address or fax number provided on the questionnaire." This presents 2 questions: 1) The Past Performance Questionnaire (PPQ) states that the respondents (Contracting Officer and COTR) should submit directly to Contracting Specialist, however the direction above says the Offeror should return the PPQ by the date specified. Can NASA please clarify whether the Offeror or the respondent is to submit directly to Tameka Woodley? 2) The timeframe specified in L.13(b).2 references that the Past Performance Volume itself is due on July 21, 2015, by 2 p.m. However, the notional date for the other volumes in the proposal is August 6, at 2 p.m. Are PPQs due back to Ms. Woodley at the same time as the Past Performance volume or the date of the remaining volumes (notionally August 6)?

A23: The Government requires that the PPQ be returned directly by the respondent (customer) to the Contract Specialist, Tameka Woodley. PPQ's are requested to be submitted at the same time as the Past Performance Volumes, on 7/31/2015.

The Government will revise L.13(b)2 to read as follows:

“The Offeror is requested to submit the Past Performance volume of the proposal on or before 2:00 p.m. local time, July 31, 2015. The Past Performance Questionnaires should be submitted by the respondent (customer) on or before 2:00 p.m. local time,

July 31, 2015.” Additionally, the Government will revise pg. 1 of the PPQ by removing the due date field and pg. 6 of the PPQ by removing the Contracting Officer and naming the Contract Specialist.”

Q24: Exhibit A, 4.7, p.30 – Will the Govt. please provide a list of all software, hardware and the current architecture in use in the ASDC?

A24: The Government provided this information in the Pre-Solicitation Conference charts (slides 31-32) conducted on 6/23/15. The Government will also upload this information to the Bidder's Resource file in the file entitled "ASDC Technologies 20150501.xlsx".

Q25: Exhibit A, 4.7, p.30 – Does the government envision a system (software and/or hardware) refresh of ASDC over the life of STARSS 3? What systems or components are targeted?

A25: The Government anticipates that most ASDC hardware, software, and technology will be refreshed during the STARSS III contract period.

Q26: Exhibit A, 4.7.3.2, p.33 – Would the Govt. provide Standard Operating Procedures and the data management plan for the ASDC (e.g., configuration management)?

A26: The ASDC does not have Standard Operating Procedures documented; therefore, the Government cannot provide this document.

Q27: Attachment 5 and Exhibit B – There is conflicting information in Attachment 5 and Exhibit B. On page 1 of Attachment 5, the first paragraph states: "The Offeror shall submit a detailed safety and health plan with Volume II of its proposal ...." However, on page 4, (sub-section titled: "H. Safety and Health Plan) of Exhibit B, it states: "The Contractor shall submit a Safety and Health Plan within 30 calendar days of contract effective date." Can the Government please clarify whether a Safety and Health Plan is to be submitted with the proposal or if it will be due 30 days after contract award? There are currently no instructions or details about a Safety and Health Plan in Section L of the proposal.

A27: The Safety and Health Plan shall be submitted with the proposal. The Government will add the Safety and Health Plan requirements to Section L.15(c) to read as follows:

“3. Safety and Health Plan - The Offeror shall address the approach to safety and health as required by NFS 1852.223-70, Safety and Health. The Offeror shall submit a Safety and Health Plan in accordance with NFS 1852.223-73, Safety and Health Plan. This plan will be incorporated in any resulting contract.”

Additionally, the Government will revise Section H of Exhibit B to read as follows:

“The Offeror shall submit a detailed safety and health plan with Volume II of its proposal showing how it intends to protect the life, health, and well-being of the public, NASA, and Contractor employees, as well as property and equipment in accordance with the format and requirements of Appendix E of NPR 8715.3, NASA General Safety Program Requirements.”

Q28: Attachment A, section 3.2 – How is the contractor expected to interface with the GFE ECMS: read-only, manual data input, or via an upload from a contractor system to the Government system? If the latter, will the Government supply an ICD as an appendix to the RFP?

A28: The Government has not yet selected the commercial-off-the-shelf Electronic Contract Management System (ECMS). A list of the minimum ECMS requirements is available for your reference in the Bidder's Resource File entitled "LCMS-Requirements.xlsx". No, the Government will not supply an ICD as an appendix to the RFP; however, an ICD will be supplied at contract award.

Q29: Attachment A, section 3.2 – Does the Government system export reports and other information for use by the contractor? If so, will the Government supply an ICD as an appendix to the RFP?

A29: See A28.

Q30: Attachment A, section 3.2 – Will the Government supply a comprehensive list of the functions performed by the GFE system (e.g., labor allocation by task, schedule management at the task level, cost estimation, and tracking, cost and schedule variance reports, etc.)?

A30: The Government is not able to provide a complete list of functions at this time. The Government will provide this information once the ECMS is procured. See A28 for a list of the minimum requirements for ECMS.

Q31: Attachment A, section 3.1 – Will the Government provide a recent Annual Work Plan (AWP) so that we know the exact nature and level of detail of the content?

A31: STARSS II does not have an AWP; therefore, the Government cannot provide an AWP.

Q32: Section 4.6.3, p.28 – The Govt. requires compliance with LaRC's proposal process. In order to comply with the requirements, will the Govt. consider supplying the proposal process?

A32: Yes, the Government will provide both the LMS CP-1340 and LPR 7510.1 via the Bidder's Resource File. LMS CP-1340 governs the Science Directorate's ROSES proposal preparation, review and approval. Proposal efforts outside of ROSES are governed by LPR 7510.1, which is managed by the NASA LaRC Office of Strategic

Analysis, Communications and Business Development (OSACB). Efforts outside of the scope of these directives are managed by the sponsoring Product Unit.

Q33: L17.a, section a – Would the Govt. clarify the wording in L.17.a where it states: "The Offeror shall include a list of the three most relevant contracts that the prime as well as each significant subcontractor have on-going or completed within the past three (3) years ...." Given that this is a Small Business Procurement, competition could be severely limited if the requirement is for three contracts from the prime to use as Past Performance citations. Would the Govt. consider re-wording to: "The Offeror shall include up to three of the most relevant contracts that the prime as well as each significant subcontractor have on-going or completed within the past three (3) years...."?

A33: The requirement of the solicitation will remain unchanged. While this is a Small Business Set-Aside, requesting a list of the three most relevant contracts is considered appropriate considering the STARSS III solicitation is a large dollar, complex procurement for vital support services for the Science Directorate at NASA Langley Research Center.

Q34: What are the current FTE's and Labor Categories in the ASDC?

A34: The current WYE and Labor Categories for all SOW areas are provided in the Bidder's Resource File entitled "STARSSII\_Historical\_Staffing\_150514.pdf".

Q35: Cost Form 3 shows 278 WYEs in Year 1 and 276 WYEs in the remaining years. Is this difference in WYEs intentional?

A35: Yes, this reduction in WYE is a result of reduced requirements of SOW 4.9 Science Flight Projects. Also, the Government has removed all WYEs for the Administrative Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant from the RFP. Therefore, the total WYEs will be 273 in Year 1 and 271 in the remaining years.

Q36: Cost Form 3 includes incumbent direct labor rates however, this list is not complete. Can the Government provide rates for all the labor categories?

A36: No, the Government has provided all the available incumbent labor rates in Form 3. However, the Government will revise Form 3 to include the following clarification:

Each "Labor Category" associated with an average direct labor rate listed in Form 3 is for a labor classification which, except in one instance, contains multiple labor categories. Thus each average direct labor rate listed in Form 3 [except for one] is an average of multiple rates for multiple labor categories falling under each respective labor classification. The Government will revise Cost Form 3 to match the labor categories to their respective labor classifications. Additional changes will be made to Form 3 to allow a suitable comparison of the proposed direct labor rates to the average direct labor rates.

Q37: On Cost Form 3, is the DL rate provided for the Technical Supervisor for the Tech Supervisor/Group Lead or for the Tech Supervisor/Task Lead?

A37: See A36.

Q38: On Cost Form 3, there is a DL rate a Scheduler/Cost Analyst, however, there are no hours for this labor category. Should there be hours for this category?

A38: No. The Government will remove the Scheduler/Cost Analyst labor category and its average direct labor rate.

Q39: In Cost Form 2, can Offerors add lines to the excel model for additional proposed technical labor categories?"

A39: No. However, per footnote (1) on Form 2, Offerors are permitted to add or subtract rows to accommodate the number of labor categories for Administration and Management.

Q40: The cost forms do not include a form for additional ODCs other than the plug number provided by the Government on Cost Form 2. Should the ODC amount on Cost Form 2 be modified to include additional ODCs required by the Offeror?

A40: An Offeror may propose ODCs in addition to the plug numbers only if offsite facility costs are proposed (provided such costs are direct costs). The Government will revise Cost Form 2 to include instructions on proposing ODCs as they relate to offsite facility costs. New footnotes will be added, and instructions (i.e., footnotes) will be renumbered. See A20 for additional clarification.

Q41: Reference Section L.16 B) 1) Form 3 indicates that "If the Offeror proposes to capture incumbent personnel as part of its overall staffing approach for STARSS III, then Offerors shall use these rates as a guide in proposing unloaded direct labor rates." However, the incumbent rates provided are for families of labor instead of by labor category. For example, there is only one incumbent rate provided for "Programmer" but there are three Programmer categories (Programmer, Associate; Programmer; and Programmer, Senior). Please clarify if the Offerors should: (1) apply the rate for the base level only, or (2) expect the average incumbent rate for each category and level with the final RFP.

A41: See A36.

Q42: Reference Section L.16 B) 1) Form 3 indicates that "If the Offeror proposes to capture incumbent personnel as part of its overall staffing approach for STARSS III, then Offerors shall use these rates as a guide in proposing unloaded direct labor rates". There are a number of RFP labor categories against which there is no incumbent rate. Of the 40 labor categories, only 9 have a matching incumbent rate. Of the 31 which don't have a match, 10 are because there is more than one category in the family (see

question #5), but 21 do not have a clear match of any kind. Will the Government provide incumbent averages for all RFP categories with the final RFP, or does the Government accept that Offerors will have to use at least two sources for direct labor rates – and the two sources may not be complimentary (i.e. the incumbent rate is based on two people while a survey rate is based on 1,000, and therefore the two are not relational)?

A42: See A36.

Q43: Reference Section L.16 B) 1) Form 3 indicates that "If the Offeror proposes to capture incumbent personnel as part of its overall staffing approach for STARSS III, then Offerors shall use these rates as a guide in proposing unloaded direct labor rates". There are four incumbent categories which do not appear to have a direct match with the RFP labor categories. These four are the Education Specialist, Electronic Technician, Scheduler/Cost Analyst, and Scientist. Why are those incumbent rates included? Does the Government intend for the Offerors to use these additional rates in a "blended" rate in other RFP categories? Or will the Government map the incumbent categories to the RFP categories? Please note that if the Government does not perform the mapping, Offerors will have to blindly do this without incumbent job descriptions, years of experience, or education minimums. The only available option for Offerors would be to match by category names.

A43: See A36.

Q44: Reference Section L.16 B) 1) Form 3 indicates that "If the Offeror proposes to capture incumbent personnel as part of its overall staffing approach for STARSS III, then Offerors shall use these rates as a guide in proposing unloaded direct labor rates". What is the effective date for these incumbent rates? Have they been escalated to the anticipated start of the new contract? Or are Offerors expected to escalate them? The only way Offerors can escalate them is to know their effective dates.

A44: The average direct labor rates are current as of the date the draft RFP was posted (06/04/2015). The Government will revise Cost Form 3 to escalate the average direct labor rates from 2015 to 2016. Therefore, the average direct labor rates listed in Form 3 will be based on 2015 actuals escalated according to the government's estimated escalation for 2016 from Global Insight at 2.9%.

Q45: RFP Attachment L shows position descriptions however, the PD for the Senior Project Manager/Project Planner and the Associate Research Scientist are not included. Please provide PDs for these labor categories.

A45: The Government will revise Attachment 11, Minimum Qualifications For Labor Categories, as follows:

The labor category for Project Manager/Project Planner will be reclassified as a Senior Project Manager/Project Planner. A separate labor category of Project Manager/Project Planner will be added.

The Government will also revise Attachment 2, Staffing Plan, to remove Associate Research Scientist, and the associated WYE will be added to Research Scientist.

Q46: Regarding the current off-site facility, does LaRC own the network connecting the contractor off-site facility and LaRC? Should the Offeror propose costs associated with the network?

A46: Offerors should refer to H.10, Government Furnished Information Technology Services of the RFP. Also, see A20 with regard to proposing off-site facility costs.

Q47: Can the Government provide guidance as to which positions will be housed at the Government facility?

A47: See A8.

Q48: Section 3.2 of the SOW states that data regarding the TDNs and TOs such as labor categories, WYEs, total cost, etc. shall be input into ECMS by the Contractor. Does this mean that each task is priced within the ECMS or should the tasks be priced outside ECMS and submitted to the Government in addition to the data to be input in ECMS?

A48: The Government anticipates that each TDN and/or TO will be priced within ECMS.

Q49: On Page 67, Section L.14, Subfactor 2, (d), there are references to (1) mission operations and (2) programs and missions supporting Earth and planetary atmospheric science and associated research and technology. Can you provide more clarification on the distinction between (1) and (2)?

A49: The Government will revise Section L.14, Subfactor 2 (d) as follows:

“(d) Collaboration, participation, or teaming with NASA’s foreign counterparts (e.g., ESA, JAXA, CNES) on programs and missions supporting Earth and planetary atmospheric science and associated research and technology.”

Q50: Attachment 2, page 4, shows a staffing plan for Section 4.7 of the SOW, the Atmospheric Science Data Center (ASDC) that is reduced significantly from the historical staffing level. Can you provide insight into why the staffing level is going down? Is it purely a result of budget, or are there other reasons?

A50: The reduction of overall staffing at the ASDC reflects a planned shift towards increased efficiencies, utilization of emerging technologies, and a highly skilled multi-disciplinary team in support of core ASDC functions.

Q51: Regarding Page 67, Section L.14, Subfactor 2, (b), what processes and tools are currently being used for knowledge capture?

A51: STARSS II has not required knowledge capture processes and tools.

Q52: Regarding Page 67, Section L.14, Subfactor 2, (a), will LaRC make available a list of major IT assets used in the ASDC production environment, including the types and quantities of servers, storage systems, and network and storage interconnect products?

A52: See A24.

Q53: Regarding Page 67, Section L.14, Subfactor 2, (a), does ASDC utilize any specific industry IT management frameworks or best practices in operating the ASDC?

A53: The ASDC is moving toward the implementation of elements of the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) practices to support services management in the ASDC. The ASDC focuses on continuous efforts to incorporate best practices in all areas in the ASDC, but does not clearly identify with any particular industry framework.

Q54: The RFP places a 15 page limit on the OCI/PCI Plan. The offerer requests that the table of contents, list of acronyms and OCI/PCI Plan attachments (I.e. Forms, certifications,) be excluded from this page limitation.

A54: The DRFP Section L.13(d)3 states that the table of contents and list of acronyms will be excluded from the page counts; however, attachments will count against the page limits.

Q55: Section L-13.d) in its description of page counts for Volume 3, Past Performance, states that there are 20 pages for the prime and 10 pages for each significant subcontractor. Is there any objection by the government to the Offeror utilizing some portion of its 20 pages to provide a summary of the collective past performance of the team?

A55: No, the Government has no objection to the Offeror utilizing a portion of its 20 pages to provide a summary of the collective past performance of its team.

Q56: Our DCAA office has moved away from audits of Contractor's business systems, and has not audited our accounting system for approximately 7 years. While our accounting system has always been determined to be adequate, and is materially unchanged since that determination was rendered, we have no current evidence of adequacy. Are older letters of adequacy acceptable for purposes of demonstrating the adequacy of our accounting system?

A56: Yes. The Government requires a copy of the most recent accounting system audit report (or other documentation from DCAA or DCMA). An Offeror may include additional details to explain the adequacy of its accounting system.

Q57: Please clarify whether historical indirect rates are to be submitted when an Offeror will establish a new cost center specifically for this proposal (i.e. historical rates or DCAA opinions of historical or provisional rates will be completely unrelated to the newly developed rates).

A57: The DRFP Section L.16(e)(1) states that, if indirect rates have not been reviewed within the last 12 months, the Offeror shall provide a three year cost history. This is true regardless of whether the Offeror is proposing to establish a new cost center. Also per L.16(e)(1), the Offeror shall explain how this contract has been considered in determining the proposed indirect rates and show the impact of this contract on the Offeror's forecasted indirect bases and pools. Therefore, if an Offeror is proposing to establish a new cost center, the Offeror should explain how the establishment of the new cost center will impact its indirect rate(s).

Q58: Qualifications of the Project Manager/Project Planner, Senior and the Research Scientist, Associate are absent from Attachment 11. We request that they be made available.

A58: See A45.

Q59: "The Offeror shall submit a detailed safety and health plan with Volume II of its proposal showing .... And Exhibit B H. Safety and Health Plan that states: " The Contractor shall submit a Safety and Health Plan within 30 calendar days of contract effective date." When is the plan due?

A59: See A27.

Q60: This Offeror holds an ongoing contract that is relevant to the work contemplated under STARSS III. However, as a result of a Government no-cost extension of a task, average annual obligations for the period of performance fall below the \$10 million threshold. Would the Government consider allowing Offerors to select a 3-year window of the contract in which annual obligations averaged in excess of \$10M?

A60: See A13.

Q61: What are the current FTE's and Labor Categories in the ASDC?

A61: See A34.

Q62: Would the Govt. please clarify what the change is in requirements or workload that is driving the decrease from 66 to 53 WYEs in the ASDC?

A62: See A50.

Q63: What is the projected change in data volume over the next 5 years?

A63: The Government cannot predict changes in data volume (e.g., requested data, downlinked data from various assets, data storage). Historically, data storage volume has increased about 700 TB a year.

Q64: In Subfactor 2 (d), why is "mission operations" distinguished from "programs and missions" in item 1) and item 2) since mission operations seems to be a subset of missions?

A64: See A49.

Q65: SOW 4.6.3 requires the contractor "to ensure compliance with LaRC's proposal processes...." In order to ensure compliance, would the government provide a diagram and discussion of this process to help bidders both see and understand the process?

A65: See A32.

Q66: Cost Form 2 – CLIN 1 and CLIN 2 Price Summaries, column headers before rate columns are labeled "Allocation Base5", however, it looks like this column should be labeled hours. Please confirm if these columns should contain hours by labor category. In addition, note 5 mentions to show all proposed indirect costs applicable to non-labor costs. Does this note apply to the columns labeled Allocation Base5?

A66: See A9. The Government will add new footnotes to Cost Form 2, and instructions (i.e., footnotes) will be renumbered. Specifically, a new footnote will be added pertaining to the columns entitled "Amount" (i.e., the proposed indirect costs), which is the result of multiplying an indirect rate [see columns entitled "Rate"] to the respective allocation base [see columns "Labor Hours or Allocation Base"] for that indirect cost element.

Q67: Cost Form 2 - CLIN 1 and CLIN 2 Price Summaries, does not have an area to indicate onsite and offsite hours by labor category.

Are Offerors allowed to change the form to break out offsite and onsite hours and direct labor costs?

A67: Yes. Offerors are allowed to change the form by adding additional rows to distinguish between onsite and offsite hours and direct labor costs. However, the only labor categories Offerors can propose in addition to those specified in Cost Form 3 are for contract administration and management.

The Government will revise Cost Form 2 instructions to provide guidance to Offerors on how to distinguish between onsite and offsite hours.

Q68: Section L.16(b)(1)Form 2 instructions states that Offerors shall not make changes to highlighted cells, however Cost Form 2 Note 2 instructs us to tailor the form (in the indirects section) according to our established accounting policies and practices. Since those cells are highlighted, please confirm that we can alter the form.

A68: Yes. The Government will revise DRFP Section L.16(b)(1) Form 2 to read as follows:

*Form 2 – CLIN 1 and CLIN 2 Price Summaries:* Offerors are required to use Form 2 to provide a breakdown of the proposed costs for CLINs 1 and 2. Form 2 includes two tables: one for the Phase-In [CLIN 1] and another for the Core effort [CLIN 2]. Note the highlighted cells in this Form have already been populated with information or are self-calculating; unless stated otherwise in the footnotes (e.g. tailoring the form to comply with established accounting policies and practices) Offerors shall not make changes to these cells.

Q69: Will the Government allow the use of a smaller font size for use within tables and figures provided as part of the proposal response? This reduced font size will allow for concise tables and detailed graphics that will ease evaluation by making potentially complicated descriptions easily discernable.

A69: See A7.

Q70: The page allocations for the Past Performance Volume provide an unfair advantage to teams with multiple significant subcontractors since they will be allowed to provide substantially more information than teams with fewer significant subcontractors. We request that the government revise the allocation to a total page for the volume with no delineation between prime Offeror and significant subcontractor page allocations. This will allow each team to determine how to use the allocated pages.

A70: The Government will not revise the page allocations for the Past Performance Volume.

Q71: Please clarify. Is the Past Performance Volume to include 3 citations from the Prime and an additional 3 citations from each significant subcontractor or is the response limited to 3 total citations?

A71: In accordance with Section L.17(a), the Past Performance Volume shall include a list of 3 contracts from the Prime and 3 additional contracts from each significant subcontractor.

Q72: Will the government authorize PDF files for submission of Volume I, Technical Proposal, Volume III Past Performance, and the supporting narrative of Volume II? This PDF submission would not apply to spreadsheets but only to those sections approved for submission in Microsoft Word.

A72: No. The Government requires that the Volumes I and III be compatible with Microsoft 2010 (or later).

Q73: The PD and Education/Experience requirements for Project Manager/Project Planer, Senior and Research Scientist, Associate are missing. Will the Government please provide them prior to the release of the Final RFP?

A73: See A45.

Q74: The current 5 page allocation for the Total Compensation Plan will make it difficult for Offerors to provide all information required in FAR 52.222-46, NFS 1852.231-71, and to demonstrate how the Offeror's plan attracts and retains highly qualified personnel. Will the government increase this page allocation to 10 pages to afford Offerors adequate pages to provide a compliant and comprehensive response?

A74: No. The Government requires that the Total Compensation Plan be limited to five pages.

Q75: LaRC's answer to Q13 released 6 July 2015 stated in part that "It is the responsibility of the offeror to clearly and completely demonstrate in its proposal the relevancy of each of the prior contracts offered in terms of size, content (by Statement of Work area specified in 11) below and complexity to the current procurement." However, 11) states" Thorough and complete description of contract work content and specific description of how prior experience is relevant to the technical content areas of Attachment 6, Past Performance Questionnaire and Instructions."

Please clarify whether we are to address the Statement of Work or the technical content areas of Attachment 6.

A75: The Offeror shall address the technical content areas of Attachment 6, Past Performance Questionnaire and Instructions. See A.13 for additional information.